

Message Text

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R 041400Z MAR 75

FM AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2275

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

C O N F I D E N T I A L THESSALONIKI 0167

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, GR, UR

SUBJECT: SOVIET DELEGATION VISITS THESSALONIKI

1. WEEKEND PAPERS REPORT PRESENCE OF FOUR-MAN SOVIET DELEGATION HERE MARCH 1 FOR WREATH-LAYING CEREMONY MARKING 57TH ANNIVERSARY OF RED ARMY. DELEGATION WAS LED BY COUNSELOR OF EMBASSY VLADIMIR POUCHKIN AND INCLUDED SECOND SECRETARY OLEG VORONKOV AND ASSISTANT MILITARY ATTACHES EVGUENIY IVANOV AND GOLITSEN (PHON). CEREMONY ATTENDED BY REPS OF "C" ARMY CORPS, CONGENS OF BULGARIA AND YUGOSLAVIA, COMMUNIST PARTY (KKE EXT.) DEPUTY MINA YIANNOU AND TWO COMMUNIST MAYORS OF OUTLYING TOWNS. PRESS MARCH 4 ALSO REPORTS CALL PREVIOUS DAY BY POUCHKIN ON THESSALONIKI MAYOR VALLAS.

2. COMMENT: SOVIETS HAVE PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED WREATHS AT SECTION OF ZEITENLIK MILITARY CEMETERY WHERE GROUP OF TWELVE SOVIET OFFICERS AND MEN SAID TO HAVE BEEN EXECUTED BY GERMANS AND TWO RUSSIAN AIRMEN KILLED IN WW II ARE BURIED. HOWECAR, HIGH PROFILE THIS YEAR'S CEREMONY AND HEAVY PRESS TREATMENT ACCORDED IT IS NEW FEATURE AS OPPOSED PAST WHEN SOV EMB MIL ATTACHE ALONE USUALLY PRESENTED WREATH WITH MINIMUM FANFARE (BEREZNYI-
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BRENNAN MEMCON MARCH 1, 1974).

3. CONSERVATIVE "ELLINIKOS VORRAS" GAVE PARTICULAR PROMINENCE TO EVENT WITH FRONT PAGE REPORT AND PICTURE HEADLINED "RUSSIANS IN THESSALONIKI". ALSO PROMINENTLY PLACED IN "VORRAS" INSIDE PAGES IS LARGE, TEXTUALLY UNRELATED PHOTO OF HELLENIC ARMY CHIEF, GEN DAVOS, GREETING SOV MIL ATT AT RED ARMY DAY RECEPTION IN ATHENS UNDER CAPTION "A WARM DOUBLE HANDCLASP, CORDIALITY AND BROAD SMILES". MOTIVE FOR EXAGGERATED PLAY GIVEN THESE SOVIET-GREEK CONTACTS BY HIGHLY NATIONALISTIC, ANTI-COMMUNIST JOURNAL SEEMS QUESTIONABLE.
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